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AND CAPITAL ACCESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1310

September 30, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20050

Mr. President,

On September 29, 2020, Chris Wallace asked you a simple question during the first Presidential debate for the 2020 Election: “Are you willing, tonight, to condemn white supremacists and militia groups, and to say that they need to stand down and not add to the violence in a number of these cities, as we saw in Kenosha and as we’ve seen in Portland?” After you asked for clarification, “Who would you like me to condemn? Who?” Mr. Wallace again easily teed you up by simply reiterating that you ought to condemn “White supremacists.” Instead of an emphatic condemnation, you went out of your way and gave heart to a known white supremacist militia group:

“Proud boys – stand back and stand by.”

Within minutes, members of the Proud Boys were calling your comments “historic,” and described your comment as a tacit endorsement of their violent tactics. They said that your comment drove a spike in “new recruits.”¹ They modified their insignia to include your words.

Your repeated failure to definitively and consistently renounce white nationalism in our country, not only during the debate but throughout the entirety of your presidency, has given life and voice to the darkest corners of our society. Unfortunately, the Proud Boys is only one of many violent, racially motivated groups that have grown and found national relevancy under your watch. According to your own FBI Director, Christopher Wray, the top domestic national security threat we face is from domestic violent extremists, and within this group the greatest risk stems from those identified as racially/ethnically motivated extremists (RMVE). RMVEs were the primary source of ideologically motivated lethal incidents in the last two years of your presidency and have been considered the most lethal of all domestic extremists since 2001.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/29/us/trump-proud-boys-biden.html>

Over the past four months, more Americans than any point in our country's history have taken to the streets to protest systemic racism and white supremacy. In a clear and unified voice, they have declared that hate, bigotry and oppression have no place in our country and demanded immediate action to root out systemic injustices that plague our society. To date, you have ignored and, at times, belittled those calls.

We demand you immediately disavow your previous statement publicly on national television and, for the first time, emphatically condemn white supremacy and violent extremist groups of all kinds, including but not limited to the Proud Boys, Boogaloes, and the Rise Above Movement. There can be no uncertainty. Without a formal condemnation, the American people are left to assume your intention is to tacitly support white nationalism and sow greater division, which will only incite more violence and discord throughout our country.

We look forward to your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



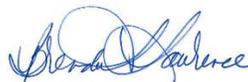
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